

Kean University

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### Policy on the Resolution of Student Complaints

Kean University

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## **Kean University**

### **Policy on Resolution of Student Complaints**

#### **I. Purpose**

Kean University is dedicated to academic excellence while providing students with a positive and supportive learning environment. The purpose of this Policy and associated procedures is to provide students with a clearly defined path for submitting and resolving their complaints concerning courses and/or programs offered or managed by Kean University.

#### **II. Accountability**

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will serve as the initial point of contact for all student complaints. All complaint decisions are issued by the appropriate division or office.

#### **III. Policy and Scope**

Kean University is a participant in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement ("SARA"), a voluntary agreement among member states and U.S. territories that establishes national standards for postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. As provided in the [SARA Policy and Operations Manual](#), students must first submit any complaints concerning Kean University via already established internal procedures. Certain complaints may then be appealed to the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education ("NJOSHE").

The Policy applies to all students who are enrolled at Kean University at the time the complaint is filed, or who were previously enrolled and have not attended the institution full-time or part-time for the previous two semesters (one academic year).

#### **IV. Procedure**

Kean University strives to resolve all student complaints in a fair and expedient manner. Only complaints that are not already covered by an existing policy or procedure will be accepted under the rules of this policy. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible after the event occurs as some of the procedures have specific deadlines for filing grievances and complaints.

##### ***Complaint Process:***

1. Complaints must be submitted **in writing** to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The complaint must describe the facts and evidence supporting the complaint and indicate what redress the grievant seeks.
2. Upon review, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will forward the complaint to the appropriate Division or Office that will be responsible for investigating the complaint and rendering a decision.
3. The student will be notified, in writing, of a decision within thirty days (30) of the compliant submission. This period may be extended for good cause and with notice given to the affected parties.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the appropriate Division or Office, the student may appeal the decision to the appropriate Vice President. The appeal must be made within fifteen days (15) of the date the grievant received the written decision.
5. The appropriate Vice President will review the written decision, conduct further investigation if needed, and issue a written decision to the grievant within thirty days (30) of appeal receipt. This period may be extended for good cause and with notice given to the affected parties.
6. Kean University prohibits retaliation against any person as a result of their submission of a concern or complaint.
7. If a student has submitted a complaint and is not satisfied with the outcome of Kean University internal procedures with respect to such complaint, he/she may submit an appeal to the NJOSHE pursuant to the procedures outlined in Section 4.5 of the [SARA Policy and Operations Manual](#).<sup>1</sup>

#### **V. Complaint Tracking and Annual Complaint Reporting**

All formal complaints submitted by a student under the complaint process guidelines will be tracked by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. An annual report will be issued by the conclusion of the academic year. The annual report will include a summary of the total number of complaints received, the type of complaint, summary of each complaint and action taken by the University to resolve the issue, the total number of appeals and percentage of decisions which were either upheld or overturned, and an analysis of any complaint

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nc-sara.org/files/docs/NC-SARA\\_Manual\\_Final\\_2016.pdf](http://www.nc-sara.org/files/docs/NC-SARA_Manual_Final_2016.pdf), p. 24-25

trends noticed and steps already taken or recommended actions.

**VI. Existing Kean University Procedures for Submitting and Resolving Complaints**

Kean University student complaints concerning student grades or conduct violations are governed entirely by the policies contained within Kean University [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) Student Catalogs. Such complaints may not be appealed outside of Kean University.

Kean University student wishing to appeal a grade for a course must follow the procedure outlined in Kean University [Undergraduate Academic Standards, Policies and Procedures](#) or Kean University [Graduate Academic Standards, Policies and Procedures](#), as appropriate.

Kean University student wishing to submit a complaint concerning a student conduct violation should contact [The Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct](#).

\*\*\*\*Please note, any student complaint must first be filed using the above outlined guidelines before proceeding to the policy contained within this document.